



Florida Agricultural Statistics Service
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VEGETABLES

WINTER ACREAGE

(January, February, March)



FLORIDA
AGRICULTURE

January 9, 2004

FLORIDA

This report reflects conditions as of January 1 and represents acreage for harvest during the winter months of January, February, March. Estimated acreage for harvest by growing area is no longer available.

WEATHER: Dry weather returned during **October** with the harvesting of very light amounts of cucumbers, eggplant, okra, peppers, squash and watermelons active during most of the month. Frequent rains in the Homestead area during the month reduced the effectiveness of pesticides, thus increasing insect populations. Sweet corn picking started during mid to late October in the Everglades region. Dry conditions continued during most of **November** and **December** prompting producers to irrigate in drier areas of the central and southern Peninsula. Strawberry growers finished most transplanting by early November and started picking light amounts of berries by Thanksgiving Day. Temperatures remained warm during the first half of November but dipped to freezing levels in many Panhandle and northern and central Peninsula localities beginning in late November and continuing through most of December. The cooler temperatures aided strawberry development around Plant City but brought most Panhandle and northern Peninsula harvesting to an end by early December. Snap bean picking increased slowly during November as more acreage reached maturity. Tomato harvesting gained momentum in the Palmetto-Ruskin, Immokalee and East Coast growing areas. Potato field preparations continued around Hastings during the month with planting active by the end. Harvesting of leafy crops got underway during late November in the Everglades and in some central Peninsula localities. Cabbage cutting and broccoli harvesting remained active in the Hastings area during December. By mid-December northern growers started land preparations for the planting of spring crop watermelons. Heavy rains in some central and southern Peninsula localities near mid-month slowed planting and lowered the quality of the more tender crops. In late December, light frosts and freezes occurred in some central and southern Peninsula localities. The cooler temperatures brought fall crop okra harvesting to an end in Miami-Dade County as snap bean picking got underway. Celery cutting became active in the Everglades area during late December.

TOMATOES: Producers expect to pick 12,000 acres during the winter months of January, February and March, down 600 acres or about five percent from last winter. Mostly clear, warm weather during October, November and December boosted growth and development and allowed planting and harvesting to proceed normally. Picking in the Quincy area remained active throughout October and most of November. Growers in the Palmetto-Ruskin, East Coast and Immokalee areas began harvesting in mid to late November. Spotty but heavy rains falling in the Palmetto-Ruskin region and a few southern Peninsula areas around mid-December caused no significant damage but lowered some fruit quality.

SWEET CORN: Growers hope to pick 8,400 acres for the winter crop, up 500 acres or six percent from last winter. Mostly dry weather during October, November and December permitted growers to keep planting on schedule. Picking started in mid to late October.

BELL PEPPER: Acreage to be harvested for the winter crop is set at 5,100 acres, down 700 acres or 12 percent from last year. Mostly dry and warm weather over the central and southern Peninsula aided crop development and allowed planting to proceed on schedule during October through most of December. Most acreage escaped significant damage from spotty but heavy rains falling in the Palmetto-Ruskin region and over a few southern Peninsula localities after mid-December. Harvesting remained active as growers fulfilled holiday market demands.

STRAWBERRIES: Strawberry acreage at 7,100 acres is the same as last year. Planting this year was mostly normal and good weather has followed. The crop looks good. Current cool weather is making berries sweeter and growers are expecting a good crop.

SNAP BEANS: Harvested acreage is forecast at 11,000 acres, down 600 acres from last year. Cool, wet weather slowed harvesting of the crop with shipments reported down so far this crop year.

CABBAGE: Growers intend to harvest 5,300 acres of cabbage through March, the same as last year. Harvesting recently started and is running behind last year. Cooler weather slowed the crop progression and shipments are just beginning. The crop appears to be in good shape with no major problems reported.

UNITED STATES

The prospective area for harvest of 11 selected fresh market vegetables during the winter quarter is forecast at 181,400 acres. This is 1 percent above 2003 but 1 percent below 2002. Acreage increases for broccoli, sweet corn, cauliflower, cabbage, head lettuce and celery more than offset decreases for Bell pepper, spinach, snap beans, tomatoes, and carrots. Strawberry acreage planted for major States (Florida, Michigan, and Oregon) in 2004 is forecast at 11,700, down 2 percent from the same States in 2003.

CABBAGE: Winter acreage for harvest is forecast at 12,500 acres, 2 percent above 2003 and up 1 percent from 2002.

CELERY: The winter celery crop for harvest in California is forecast at 7,600 acres, up 1 percent from last year and the year before. The quality of the celery crop is good with no pest or disease problems. Hot weather in October could delay the

southern California desert harvest by a couple of weeks. Yields are reported as being normal to above normal in most growing areas of the central coast.

HEAD LETTUCE: Area for harvest is forecast at 63,500 acres, up 1 percent from last year but 2 percent below two years ago. Growing conditions in western Arizona have varied greatly. During the growing season, above average temperatures resulted in seeders and some fields being plowed under. Conditions returned to normal for a week or two and then temperatures dropped below average resulting in a drop in production. California growers in the Imperial Valley experienced cool nighttime temperatures during December 2003 which hindered crop development. Harvest progressed more slowly than usual as a result. However, warmer weather followed causing accelerated growth of the lettuce crop and increased supplies.

Selected Fresh Market Vegetables and Strawberries: Area for Harvest by Crop, State, and Total, Winter Season, 2002-2003 and Forecasted Area 2004

Selected crops and States	Usual harvest period	Winter acreage			2004 area for harvest as percent of 2003
		Harvested		For harvest 2004	
		2002	2003		
		Acres			Percent
SNAP BEANS:					
Florida	Jan-Mar	12,000	11,600	11,000	95
CABBAGE:					
Florida	Jan-Mar	5,500	5,300	5,300	100
Texas	Dec-Mar	6,900	7,000	7,200	103
Total		12,400	12,300	12,500	102
SWEET CORN:					
Florida	Jan-Mar	8,400	7,900	8,400	106
BELL PEPPER: ^{1/}					
Florida	Jan-Mar	5,600	5,800	5,100	88
TOMATOES:					
Florida	Jan-Mar	12,500	12,600	12,000	95
CARROTS:					
California	Jan-Mar	21,500	21,500	21,000	98
Texas	Dec-Mar	2,100	1,000	1,000	100
Total		23,600	22,500	22,000	98
HEAD LETTUCE:					
Arizona--Western	Nov-Apr	50,000	47,000	47,500	101
California	Jan-Mar	14,500	16,000	16,000	100
Total		64,500	63,000	63,500	101
BROCCOLI: ^{1/}					
California	Jan-Mar	25,500	26,500	29,000	109
CAULIFLOWER: ^{1/}					
California	Jan-Mar	8,800	8,500	8,800	104
CELERY: ^{1/}					
California	Jan-Mar	7,500	7,500	7,600	101
SPINACH:					
Texas	Dec-Mar	2,200	1,700	1,500	88
TOTAL OF CROPS LISTED					
Florida		44,000	43,200	41,800	97
United States		183,000	179,900	181,400	101
STRAWBERRIES ^{1/}					
Florida	Dec-May	6,900	7,100	7,100	100

^{1/} Includes fresh market and processing.